



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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December 13, 2006

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Mike Shelton, SBOH Acting Chair

SUBJECT: PETITION FOR RULE MAKING: CHAPTER 246-101 WAC, NOTIFIABLE CONDITIONS – ADDING CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE

Background and Summary

On October 25 2006, the Board received a letter from Steven M. Wilt of Port Orchard requesting it to require the reporting of cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) to public health authorities. Mr. Wilt lost his wife to the disease. He stated a feeling that more research effort would be devoted to fighting the disease if more complete national statistics are collected on the incidence of the disease. Many states have specific reporting requirements for cases of CJD. However, Washington does not.

There are two recognized forms of CJD. One is called classic CJD or sporadic CJD. The cause of classic CJD is a prion of unknown source, but possibly with a genetic basis. The other form is called variant CJD and has been linked to consumption of, or exposure to, beef products infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or "mad cow disease." Other varieties of rare prion-caused diseases occur in humans and animals. The incidence of human cases of prion-caused diseases world-wide is approximately one per million annually. The human diseases progress rapidly from onset and are always fatal.

The Board has adopted Chapter 246-101 WAC, Notifiable Conditions. It contains a listing of diseases for which notification of public health authorities in Washington is required. CJD and other prion-caused diseases are not specifically listed. However, there is a category for "rare diseases of public health significance." The two forms of CJD fit this category.

Board Policy 2005-01 guides the handling of petitions for rule making (attached). In most instances, the Board's executive director makes a recommendation to the Board chair on how to respond. The chair is authorized to respond without further Board action, but may choose to bring a request to the Board for a vote. Board members can also call for a vote.

Board Action Recommended

The Board may choose to consider, amend if necessary, and adopt the following motion:

Motion: The Board denies the petition from Steven Wilt to initiate rule making at this time to add Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) to the list of diseases that specifically must be reported to public health authorities under Chapter 246-101 WAC. The Board requests the Department of Health to encourage the reporting of cases of all prion-caused diseases in humans to public health authorities under the category of "rare diseases of public health significance" for the purpose of helping evaluate whether to consider adding prion-caused diseases in humans, including CJD, to the list of notifiable conditions during the next revision of Chapter 246-101 WAC.